

4005 Plenary IV Sunday 12:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Planning Committee Sponsored

Remarks of the Rev. William G. Sinkford, UUA President,
On the celebration of a changed relationship
Between the UUA and the Canadian Unitarian Council

A long and difficult process has led up to this ceremonial and celebratory occasion. Canadian Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists had to -- sometimes it felt like almost literally -- beat on your American co-religionists to get our attention. You had to penetrate our privilege and help us see that Canada was not the United States...just further north.

We finally got it.

We were helped by all of the work the Association has done on oppression and privilege. It took us more time than Canadian UUs might have liked, but we got it.

As much as we need to celebrate this change in our relationship, it is also important to acknowledge how difficult this has been for many...on both sides of the border. At heart we are dealing with issues of identity here. And identity runs deep.

My hope is that this change in relationship will not distance us. My prayer is that what we celebrate here today will move us not out of relationship, but into right relationship. The stream of history in which both American and Canadian Unitarian Universalists stand demands that we remember that what unites us is far more important than what divides us.

I think I've had a far easier year than you in Canada. I have a service delivery system in place. You have had to invent one. I want you to know that we know how hard you have worked.

If we had a different ecclesiology, a different structure for church leadership, I would be offering the CUC a formal blessing. Go forth and live out the Good News of our faith in Canada, I would be saying. Remember whence you came and the rich tradition which we share, I would intone. Don't wait till you have work to call, I might add.

But we are a faith that hates authority. So let me ask you to accept my, and our, heartfelt, but non-authoritarian, our struggling to understand our power and privilege, our loving and we hope empowering blessing.

Go forth and spread the Good News of this faith in Canada. Remember where you came from and the rich tradition which we share, which you will live out in your context. And don't wait till you have work to call.